

WINE: Metz Road Chardonnay, Riverview Vineyard (\$30)

PRESENTERS: Scheid Family Wines
VP of winemaking Dave Nagengast
and assistant winemaker/enologist
Casey Di Cesare

VERDICT: Terroir, honored by
advanced technology and age-old
techniques alike

If you've ever been to Scheid Family Wines' state-of-the-art wine-making facility in Greenfield, California, it's possible that you may have mistaken it for a sparkling silver city—its size a testament to the output from 4,000 acres of certified-sustainable estate vineyards it's required to handle. Yet the technology integrated within allows for a gentler approach that's described by VP of winemaking Dave Nagengast as "very small, high-end production on a large scale."

But not too far from these shimmering headquarters, among unassuming blocks of Chardonnay and Pinot Noir in the Riverview Vineyard in Soledad, stands a humble shipping container that yields just 16 barrels: It's home to Scheid's Metz Road label. "We're tiny, but we're getting that sense of place, and that's what we're going for," said assistant winemaker Casey Di Cesare.

Di Cesare revealed that his own definition of terroir includes the site's microbiota: "Not only are we talking about climate and soil but also about the specific organisms that are living in the vineyard—in other words, what is going to be doing the fermentation." This is why the shipping container is separated from the main winemaking facility—to mitigate the high risk of commercial yeasts taking over the fermentation process. "Commercial yeasts are fantastic fermenters; they're reliable and predictable. But that's not what we want for this wine. With Metz Road, we want to highlight the unique saccharomyces [and] non-saccharomyces that are living in the vineyard and feature what they will do to the wine," Di Cesare explained, adding that he and Nagengast did so via "an old, simple technique": simply pressing the grapes and letting the juice ferment. He went on to credit certain non-saccharomyces yeasts for creating an abundance of mannoproteins, which can in turn increase body and mouthfeel; others help establish different aroma profiles.

Which naturally occurring non-saccharomyces yeast strains end up making it into the wine is dependent on the climatic conditions of each vintage and vineyard treatments, according to Di Cesare. The strains, like all yeast, are also quite sensitive to sulfur. "We want to use just enough to protect the wine but not so much that these non-saccharomyces yeasts will die off," he added. The winemakers then have the wine's DNA analyzed to ensure that no cultured yeast has somehow bullied its way into the mix.

These non-interventionalist yet high-tech applications perhaps help to produce what Nagengast calls his favorite of all Scheid expressions, hailing from a wholly unique slice of Monterey.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF SCHEID FAMILY WINES



Riverview Vineyard
is located in the cool
eastern benchlands of
the Salinas Valley.



**Metz Road 2018
Chardonnay,
Riverview Vineyard,
Monterey (\$30)**

This estate-grown Chardonnay comes from a sustainably farmed 340-acre vineyard in the cool eastern benchlands of the Salinas Valley. Morning fog and strong winds off Monterey Bay add to its personality, as

do the decomposed granite soils and on-site fermentations with wild yeast. Aging in 100% French oak for 12 months and regular lees stirring impart a creamy brioche effect on the nose and palate. Golden Delicious apple, honey, and chamomile pave the path to an inherent richness. A fine acid structure and a seashell minerality break through, delivering a sensation of freshness and notes of mango and orange marmalade on the finish. **93** —*M.M.*

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**Metz Road 2018
Pinot Noir, Riverview
Vineyard, Monterey
(\$35)**

Aged for 12 months in (37% new) French oak, this blend represents a selection from a different vineyard block each year. An undeniably sweet earthiness exudes from the glass, along with fragrances of cranberry, currant, and rhubarb. Flavors

of bright red cherry, saddle leather, and incense are punctuated by high-toned acidity. White pepper gives way to red pepper and the vibrant reappearance of cranberry. Vanilla-cedar spice on the finish brings it all together. **93** —*M.M.*

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